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SUBJECT: TAKING A LEAD IN THE ENERGY AND CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP OF THE AMERICAS

REF: STATE 10075

11. (SBU) Summary. Colombia plans to host the first regional Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) meeting in Bogota on February 26 in preparation for the April ECPA ministerial. Department of Energy officials visited Bogota to assist the GOC's planning efforts. The regional meeting is expected to provide an overview of ECPA, objectives for the April ECPA ministerial, and a presentation on Colombia's ECPA initiative -- regional electricity interconnection. Colombia plans to invite government and private sector representatives from the Andean countries, Chile, Panama, United States, and officials from the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), the Regional Energy Integration Commission (CIER), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), and the Organization of American States (OAS). End Summary.

ECPA strengthens Colombia's regional and bilateral relationships

12. (SBU) In its efforts to be a regional energy player and support U.S. initiatives, the GOC is assuming a leadership role in the ECPA program (reftel). Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) agreed to host a regional meeting in preparation for the April ECPA ministerial in Washington D.C. Department of Energy (DOE) officials, American Affairs Director Gary Ward and International Relations Specialist Lindsay Einstein, visited Bogota January 27-30 to help MFA and MME officials plan the regional meeting, scheduled for February 26, 2010 in Bogota at the MFA.

13. (SBU) MFA's Vice-Minister Adriana Mejia Hernandez and MME's Vice-Minister Silvana Giaimo will host the event. Giaimo stressed to us that ECPA will strengthen its relationships both regionally and bilaterally. She also noted that energy is one of seven areas in which the Ministry of Trade wants to strengthen since it creates both domestic and international business for Colombia.

14. (SBU) The GOC plans to invite Director-level MFA and Ministry of Energy representatives from the Andean region (Bolivia, Ecuador,

Peru, and Venezuela), Chile, and Panama. Also invited are members from the business communities involved in electricity interconnection from each respective country. GOC is counting on OLADE, CIER, IDB, and OAS participation. DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Energy Cooperation Phyllis Yoshida plans to represent the United States at the February 26 event.

15. (SBU) The regional ECPA meeting will present an overview of ECPA, discuss objectives for the April ECPA ministerial, highlight benefits of regional electricity interconnection, and outline Colombia's regional interconnection initiative, which looks to interconnect Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. The GOC also will note its interconnection with Venezuela (to not leave them in the dark) and its interconnection project with Panama (which is on track to be completed by late 2012 and provide Panama 300MW of hydroelectric generated power).

16. (SBU) DOE officials also met with the private sector, the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), Ecopetrol, and other GOC offices, including the Ministry of Environment and the National Hydrocarbon Agency to drum up support for the regional ECPA meeting and the April ECPA ministerial. All noted high interest in the two events and were enthusiastic about participating in both.

GOC's long-term vision on ECPA

17. (SBU) Comment. The GOC, as well as the private sector, has shown strong interest in hosting a regional ECPA event. Colombia's vision of ECPA is long-term, because it sees ECPA as an integral theme for the next Summit of the Americas, scheduled to take place in Cartagena in April/May 2012. Colombia's regional interconnection initiative is well thought out and has private sector buy-in. But two weak links have surfaced: lack of smart grid technology and the need for technical assistance to improve electricity transmission over long distances.

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